

- a specific delivery pressure; and/or
- a specific suction speed; and/or
- a specific solvent volume; and/or
- a specific ration of solvent volumes.

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 are pending. By this Preliminary Amendment, claims 3-7, 10, 13-14, 16-19, 25-27 and 29-30 are amended to eliminate multiple dependencies. Prompt and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Appendix

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APPENDIX

Changes to Claims:

The following are marked-up versions of the amended claims:

3. (Amended) Solid phase extraction process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the temperature of the cartridge is raised or lowered in step a), preferably by heating or cooling the liquid for conditioning of the sorbent.
4. (Amended) Solid phase extraction process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the temperature of the cartridge is raised or lowered in step b), preferably by heating or cooling the liquid which contains the sample.
5. (Amended) Solid phase extraction process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the temperature of the cartridge is raised or lowered in step c), preferably by heating or cooling the wash liquid.
6. (Amended) Solid phase extraction process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterised in that the temperature of the cartridge is raised or lowered in step d), preferably by heating or cooling the elution liquid.
7. (Amended) Solid phase extraction according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~ Claim 1 which also comprises the step of drying the cartridge, before or after one or more of the steps a) to d), drying being carried out by passing a suitable gas through the cartridge, characterised in that the gas is heated prior to feeding to the cartridge.
10. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to Claim 8 or 9, characterised in that the line system is provided with a gas connection and valve means in order to connect the gas connection to the heating and/or cooling means 73 and the at least one cartridge holder 3 in such a way that gas issuing from the gas connection flows successively through the heating and/or cooling means 73 and the at least one cartridge holder 3.

13. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to Claims 11-~~or~~12, characterised in that the transport system comprises a guide bridge 18 with one or more cartridge grippers 19 mounted thereon and movable along said guide bridge 18, in that the guide bridge 18 is mounted above the at least one cartridge magazine 17, or the at least one cartridge magazine holder 14, and in that the guide bridge 18 and the at least one cartridge magazine 17, or the at least one cartridge magazine holder 14, are movable relative to one another in a direction essentially transverse to the longitudinal direction of the guide bridge 18, and in that the control system is equipped to control this mutual movement.

14. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to Claim 12 ~~and~~13, characterised in that the transport system comprises two cartridge grippers 19 for picking up, moving and setting down cartridges 11, which cartridge grippers 19 can be controlled essentially independently of one another by the control system.

16. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to Claim 13-~~or~~15, characterised in that this comprises at least two cartridge magazines 17, or cartridge magazine holders 14, which are positioned alongside one another viewed in the longitudinal direction of the guide bridge 18 and in that said cartridge magazines 17, or cartridge magazine holders 14, are movable relative to one another in the transverse direction of the guide bridge 18, and in that the control system is equipped to move said cartridge magazines 17, or cartridge magazine holders 14, relative to one another.

17. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to ~~one of~~ Claims 11-16 Claim 11, characterised in that the input means are equipped for entering an operator's choice for a specific solid phase extraction process and in that the control system is equipped to select the type of cartridge belonging to that specific solid phase extraction process; and/or in that the input means are equipped to enter an operator's choice for a specific type of cartridge,

the control system being equipped to determine the specific cartridge location which contains an unused cartridge of that selected or specified type of cartridge.

18. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to ~~one of Claims 11-17~~ ~~Claim 11~~, wherein the at least one line system comprises at least one single or multi-way valve which is functionally connected to the control system for operation, and comprises at least two cartridge holders 3, characterised in that the control system is equipped to:

- a) switch two cartridge holders in series; and/or
- b) to switch the one cartridge holder in liquid communication with a solvent feed device located upstream thereof and to be able to switch the other cartridge holder in simultaneous liquid communication with a sample feed device located upstream thereof; and/or
- c) to switch the one and the other cartridge holder each in mutual simultaneous liquid communication with a solvent feed device or a sample feed device.

19. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to ~~one of Claims 11-18~~ ~~Claim 11~~, characterised in that at least one cartridge magazine 17 and/or the cartridges 11 are provided with code means for the type of cartridge in each cartridge location or for the type of cartridge, and in that the solid phase extraction instrument is provided with reading means for reading the code means and for transmitting the code(s) read to the control system.

25. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to ~~one of Claims 22-24~~ ~~Claim 22~~, characterised in that the control system is equipped to be able to control the injection pump 44 for a delivery stroke with an essentially constant speed or delivery pressure.

26. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to ~~one of Claims 22-25~~ ~~Claim 22~~, characterised in that a pressure sensor 48 for measuring the pressure in the

injection pump 44 is provided in or by the injection pump 44, which pressure sensor 48 is actively connected to the control system in order to transmit a pressure signal to the latter.

27. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to ~~one of Claims 22-26~~ ~~Claim 22~~, characterised in that the solvent feed device 40 comprises a first multi-way valve 49 to which, on the one side, the injection pump 44 is connected by means of the suction channel 47 and which, on the other side, is provided with a number of solvent connections to which solvent reservoirs can be connected or have been connected, and in that the control system is equipped to switch the multi-way valve 49 during suction by the injection pump 44 in such a way that a mixture is drawn in which is collected in the injection pump and/or to switch the multi-way valve 49 prior to suction by the injection pump 44.

29. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to Claim 27 ~~or 28~~, characterised in that the solvent feed device 40 comprises at least a further multi-way valve 56 to which, on the one side, one of the solvent connections of the first multi-way valve 49 is connected and which, on the other side, is provided with further solvent connections.

30. (Amended) Solid phase extraction instrument according to ~~one of Claims 22-29~~ ~~Claim 22~~, characterised in that the control system comprises input means for entering an operator's choice for

- a specific solid phase extraction process; and/or
- a specific solvent or combination of solvents; and/or
- a specific delivery pressure; and/or
- a specific suction speed; and/or
- a specific solvent volume; and/or
- a specific ration of solvent volumes.